

CLEAN AIR ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting of the Subcommittee on Linking Land Use, Transportation, and Air Quality
Thursday, June 11, 1998

Tyson's Corner Marriott
8028 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, VA 22182

Lucie Audette (filling in for Gay MacGregor), EPA-OMS, and Bob Wyman, Latham and Watkins, called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. After the attendees introduced themselves, the minutes from the previous meeting were formally accepted by the subcommittee.

Case Study on the Air-Brownfields Pilot (Leah Yasenchak, EPA-OAR)

Leah Yasenchak, EPA-OAR, began the case study on the Air-Brownfields Pilot by noting that the Pilot is a joint effort by EPA (including OAR, OSWER, and OP) and the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, and was formed to address concerns voiced by the U.S. Conference of Mayors that the new clean air standards are in conflict with EPA's goals for redeveloping brownfields. One of the first steps EPA took in getting the Program underway was to commit to the U.S. Conference of Mayors to work with a few cities on using the Clean Air Act to encourage redevelopment. Based on a number of key characteristics, the three cities selected for the Pilot were Baltimore, Chicago, and Dallas.

Ms. Yasenchak then presented some of the objectives for the Pilot. Through the Pilot, EPA is attempting to identify models and tools that are currently in use for quantifying the emissions reductions and air quality benefits of redevelopment, as well as incentives that would be useful to encourage redevelopment. EPA also plans to assist cities in identifying effective, innovative, and replicable ways to redevelop while at the same time complying with air quality standards. EPA also will be researching the potential of giving credit for system-wide emission reductions when clean utilities locate in the city.

Ms. Yasenchak explained that EPA will be working with the Pilot cities to develop redevelopment plans that will show them how they can apply these tools to development and other complementary programs. EPA will also be (1) developing protocols that can be applied in other cities, (2) disseminating information that has been gathered, and (3) evaluating projects in

Questions and Comments

- Chuck Collett, NAHB, asked if, in determining the Pilot cities, EPA identified specific areas where it would be involved. Ms. Yasenchak responded that EPA's focus is likely to come out in the individual work sessions with each of the cities. Based on each city's needs, the focus could be on specific parts of the city or on the city as a whole. Mr. Collett also asked about the role of the Conference of Mayors in the program. Ms. Yasenchak responded that the Conference helped select the Pilot cities and has convened a group to monitor and assess the progress of the Pilot.
- Rick Rybeck, DC Dept. of Public Works, asked what EPA means by the term "clean utilities." Ms. Yasenchak responded that the concept basically relates to locating utilities in certain areas of cities where providing services is relatively costly in order to provide cheaper power to those areas and to reduce the demand load on the overall system. Mr. Rybeck also asked about opportunities for other cities (e.g., Washington, D.C.) to apply to this program. Ms. Yasenchak responded that other cities will be considered in the VMT analysis segment of the program. She also noted that EPA hopes to be able to replicate the program in other areas in approximately two years.
- Bill Goldsmith, Cornell University, asked whether representatives from the Pilot cities have been involved in the program, or whether EPA is just dealing with the local MPOs. Ms. Yasenchak responded that EPA is working with representatives from the cities, the surrounding areas, and the state. Mr. Goldsmith also made some general comments on equity issues concerning the Pilot.
- Mary Nichols, Environment Now, asked whether EPA's goal is to develop "air attainment plans" for the Pilot cities. Ms. Yasenchak responded that EPA is primarily trying to create a toolbox that cities can use to help achieve cleaner air and to quantify the effects of various clean air initiatives.
- Harriet Tregoning, EPA, suggested that a goal of the program should also be to encourage states to consider the air quality benefits of urban and infill development in their policy making processes.

At the conclusion of the discussion. Ms. Audette distributed a list of the Brownfield

Case Study on the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH) (Chuck Collett, NAHB)

Mr. Collett began his presentation by distributing four documents on PATH to the meeting attendees (one of these documents presents a short comparison of PATH to the Clean Air Communities program developed by the subcommittee in 1997). He explained that the program is a public/private partnership for developing and deploying new technologies for American housing, and noted that both President Clinton and Vice President Gore have endorsed the program. Mr. Collett then indicated that the purpose of his presentation was mainly to distribute information on PATH so that the subcommittee could learn about the program and discuss it at the next meeting.

Case Study on Local Environmental Review and Revising the CEQA Handbook (Bob Wyman, Latham and Watkins)

Mr. Wyman began his presentation by reviewing an issue, discussed in the Clean Air Communities document, concerning the limited experience of state and local governments in identifying “clean” development projects. He informed the subcommittee that the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is currently reviewing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Handbook, which is currently used by officials in California to review large development projects. SCAQMD is looking to change the CEQA Handbook to provide incentives for clean land use.

Mr. Wyman then provided background information on federal and state authority over land use, and noted that environmental review statutes have been the main vehicle by which land use has been reviewed. He also provided an overview of the CEQA Handbook. The Handbook provides guidance on how to analyze the potential air quality impacts of regionally significant projects, how to determine if projects are significant, and how to mitigate adverse effects from projects; however, it basically treats all development projects as if they are the same. Also, the Handbook focuses on the total mass emissions of a project, which is problematic because small development projects are almost always below the significance threshold while large projects are almost always above the significance threshold (regardless of their design or per capita emissions). The net effect of the focus on mass emissions is to discourage large-scale development in favor of piecemeal development.

development projects could be shown to have net emissions decreases relative to projected emissions based on “conventional” growth.

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Wyman outlined the three proposals that have been submitted to the SCAQMD for consideration as qualifying criteria for a “clean air community:”

- (1) On the whole, the project will reduce per capita or per square foot emissions relative to what is assumed in the air quality plan;
- (2) The project advances innovative technology; and
- (3) The project is based on an action-oriented plan.

Questions and Comments

- Judy Odoulamy, U.S. DOE, expressed a general concern over whether there are enough modelers available to implement the proposed changes to the CEQA Handbook. Mr. Wyman responded that the number of modelers is currently not an issue, and that it is just a matter of taking the time to actually quantify the benefits from transportation and development projects. Ms. Odoulamy also suggested using a hybrid approach through which models could be used to develop lists of “best practices” for developers. Ms. Audette added that FHWA is currently involved in a similar effort.
- Steve Gerritson agreed with many of the proposed revisions to the CEQA Handbook, but cautioned that (1) measurement of emissions on a per capita basis might be too crude, and (2) the revisions might encourage earlier rather than later development (which could force certain projects out due to SIP constraints).
- Pete Jonker, Southern California Gas Company, stressed that emission credits should be considered in the CEQA revision process, despite the difficulties that may arise.
- Mr. Goldsmith expressed concerns over a “one size fits all” approach to evaluating development projects. He stressed that measuring emissions on a per square foot basis is inaccurate, and that *where* a particular development is constructed is really what matters. Mr. Goldsmith also questioned how equity issues can be addressed in the CEQA revision

- Mr. Collett commented that programs that place the same criteria on both large and small developers cannot work.
- Ms. Nichols observed that very few projects in the South Coast are large enough to trigger CEQA review and stressed the need for SCAQMD to focus on regional scale projects. She also stressed the importance of good land use plans at the local level.
- Paul Schimek, U.S. DOT/Volpe Center, added that parking policies are linked to land use and can be a useful tool for lowering trip generation rates.

At the conclusion of the discussion on this case study, Ms. Audette asked the subcommittee members to think about whether it would be useful to open all future meetings with case study presentations. She also distributed a matrix of sustainable development activities.

Creation of a New National Sustainable Development Award Program for Commercial and Residential Development Practitioners (Matt Borick, ICF Incorporated)

Ms. Audette began the discussion of a new national sustainable development award program by reminding the subcommittee about the Clean Air Communities recommendation calling for the development of a recognition program for best practices. She then introduced the proposed award program and asked the subcommittee members to provide feedback on the overall program as well as the specific components.

Matt Borick, ICF Incorporated, began the presentation on the new award program by defining the term “sustainable development” as it applies to the program and outlining the goals of the program. The goals of the program are as follows:

- To recognize innovative development practices;
- To reward developers of all sizes and in all areas of the country; and
- To provide an educational tool for promoting “best practices” in development.

- The program would be administered by EPA in partnership with another federal agency (e.g., HUD, DOT, or DOE), NAHB, and an organization representing local interests (e.g., NLC).
- The award would be a recognition award, would be competitive in nature, and would be presented annually.
- The award would be open to individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities and would allow for self- or third-party nomination. The program would award projects, policies, or new concepts.
- The program would require an application (with no limit on the number of applicants) and would require an entry fee of between \$25 to \$50 (waived for non-profits and government entities).
- The award would be given in 12 categories based on type of development (commercial, residential, mixed) and population, with one winner per category in each eligibility group.
- The award criteria would include (1) high degree of innovation, (2) in place for at least 6 months, (3) increased access by means other than SOVs, (4) community enhancement and acceptance, (5) sustained results, and (6) replicability.
- The judging panel would consist of staff from each of the program partners.
- The award would be presented at a special ceremony.
- The program would be marketed using the world wide web, program publications, national media advertisements, and informal networking (“word-of-mouth”).

Ms. Tregoning noted that this would require a different set of partners than proposed (e.g., a lifestyle magazine such as *Southern Living*, or a design magazine), and may require that the award have a more regional rather than national focus. The award could then include criteria that appeal more to consumers, such as communities that promote good health (e.g., because people can walk to places), convenience (e.g., increased access or mobility due to increased transportation choices; convenient to work, shopping, banks, etc.), safety, liveability, or good design, while at the same time improving environmental quality.

- Mr. Boer commented on legal issues concerning public and private sector judges for the award program. He stressed that if the judges are largely from the public sector, the awards could be viewed as government favoritism. If the judges are from the private sector, full financial disclosure may be required. He indicated that a way around the private sector problem may be to involve private foundations.
- Ms. Odoulamy suggested that the award program could have both local and national aspects. She noted that program partners could first develop general criteria for “total excellence” and then offer the first tier of awards at the local level, with these awards being linked to specific community goals. The award criteria could then be refined at the national level. She stressed that a good way to promote the program would be to involve the media at both the local and national levels.
- Mr. Rybeck noted that the proposed award program is similar to a number of existing programs, and suggested that the program could be re-focused on consumer lifestyle and rewarding behavioral choices (e.g., driving less, conserving energy).
- Mr. Wyman added that a key element of the Clean Air Communities program is developing a consumer-oriented set of incentives, which would reward consumers for making choices that promote cleaner air. He also noted that consumers pay a lot of attention to annual surveys that highlight the “best” places to live, and suggested that the environmental friendliness of a community can play a role here.
- William Donahue, Sun Company, suggested that the focus of the award program be expanded beyond land use and commercial and residential development. He also noted that EPA’s 33/50 program could be used as a model for the award program.

approach might be to offer only a few awards to communities that are doing something very special (taking whatever time is necessary to determine winners).

- Mr. Collett commented that a number of the awards presented by NAHB start on small scale and grow larger over time. He explained that, by recognizing award-winning ideas in ceremonies held at NAHB's annual conference, development ideas/efforts in one area can have a profound influence on development in other areas.

Mr. Wyman concluded the discussion on the award program by suggesting that the subcommittee could convene a workgroup to develop a refined proposal for the next meeting.

Update on the EPA/DOT Trans-Air Initiative

Kathy Daniel, U.S. DOT, began the presentation by providing an overview of the Trans-Air Initiative, including the research findings and the short-term and long-term objectives. She also presented the three-tiered approach for promoting the Initiative, which consists of (1) developing a national coalition to work on transportation/air quality issues, (2) establishing community-based programs, and (3) delivering national messages.

Ms. Daniel then described the national messages in more detail. The messages address three actions -- combining trips, maintaining vehicles, and making smart transportation choices -- and are designed to reinforce existing behaviors, make it easy for people to make a difference, and change perceptions about air quality. She then presented several TV ads and print ads to the subcommittee.

Laura McClure, Equals Three Communications, next discussed the evaluation of the national message. She explained that the evaluation will require (1) drawing conclusions from the experience at the pilot sites in Dover, Milwaukee, and San Francisco, (2) tracking progress, (3) refining the Initiative to improve performance, and (4) implementing a national effort. She also described four feedback loops (formative research, process evaluation, impact evaluation, and outcome evaluation) that will be useful for showing the links between the efforts under the Initiative and the desired results. These feedback loops will involve research, activities, objectives, and outcomes. Ms. McClure then presented a few scenarios showing how the evaluation process is designed to work. In refining the Initiative based on the results of the pilot program evaluation,

Odoulamy also made a few general comments concerning the effectiveness of using coalitions to help promote the Initiative.

- Tom Godar, American Lung Association, asked whether the ads have been tested on teenagers. Ms. Audette responded that the target audience is the driving public in general, but agreed that some degree of focus on youth would be beneficial. Susan Bullard, EPA-OMS, noted that many driver education programs now address the issue of proper vehicle maintenance. Ms. Audette added that the work with the three pilot sites, along with the community-based coalitions, will be helpful in raising awareness at all levels. Denise Keyes, Equals Three Communications, added that the pilot sites are undertaking specific efforts to target youth. Mr. Wyman noted that a more “radical” approach may be necessary to reach younger generations.
- Mr. Wyman suggested that the subcommittee show the TV ads at the meeting of the full committee. He also noted that showing the logo of the local supporting organization at the end of each TV ad is helpful in delivering the message.
- Mr. Donahue asked about the status of the national coalition. Ms. McClure responded that focus groups and a stakeholder survey have been conducted for the purpose of determining the potential structure and roles of the national coalition. She also indicated that a next step will be to invite key stakeholders to Washington to serve as a selection committee and to provide advice on developing the national coalition.

Ms. McClure concluded the presentation on the Trans-Air Initiative by inviting the subcommittee members to provide any feedback they had on the Initiative.

Presentation on Commuter Choice Programs (John Hall, EPA-OMS)

John Hall, EPA-OMS, began the presentation by outlining two key questions regarding commuter choice programs. The first question concerns how to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes, such as carpools/vanpools, buses, trains, bicycles, and walking. The second question concerns the impact of commuter choice programs on the environment, land use, and community liveability. Mr. Hall then explained that EPA is promoting commuter choice using the concept of “parking cash out,” which allows commuters to receive cash compensation in lieu of a

Mr. Hall next discussed the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, which allows employers to finance commute benefit choices with funds that are already being spent on compensation and benefits. Under this law, employers are encouraged to offer their employees an expanded menu of commute benefits, which can increase employee welfare and yield net savings to the company.

Mr. Hall then discussed the benefits of commuter choice programs to both downtown and suburban employers. Downtown employers are more likely to take advantage of the new tax law because more transportation options are available, downtown parking typically is sold by the space, downtown parking costs are rapidly increasing, and downtown employees like having a variety of choices. Suburban employers can also benefit from the new law because commuter choice alleviates the need to build new parking lots and because regional congestion and air quality concerns affect the suburbs as well as downtown areas. In addition, when offered choices, suburban employees tend to choose carpooling or telecommuting, so the availability of public transit is not an issue.

Regarding the transportation and air quality impacts of commuter choice programs, Mr. Hall noted that mode shifts and air quality benefits are indeed possible, but the magnitude of these impacts depends on a number of site-specific factors. He informed the subcommittee that EPA is currently working on a Commuter Choice Protocol Development Guidance that will assist states in quantifying the air quality benefits of commuter choice programs. EPA also has a contractor working on the issue of employer/employee participation rates in these programs. Mr. Hall next outlined the four steps for estimating the emission reductions from commuter choice programs:

- (1) Estimate the number of passenger vehicles driven to work in a given area;
- (2) Estimate the proportion of these vehicles driven to an employer offering commuter choice;
- (3) Forecast the type and value of new commuter choice benefits, estimate driver response, and incorporate compliance and uncertainty factors; and
- (4) Estimate the total VMT change and associated emissions change.

Mr. Hall then discussed other individuals and organizations that need to be involved in encouraging and promoting commuter choice programs, including air quality agencies,

Information can also be obtained from EPA's Transportation Air Quality Center (TRAQ) web site at www.epa.gov/omswww/traq, or by calling (734) 214-4100. Mr. Hall also noted that EPA is looking to form a workgroup to investigate how the benefits of voluntary measures programs can be quantified.

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Mittelholzer asked about the potential number of people who could benefit from parking cash out programs. Ms. Audette responded that surveys have estimated that there currently are 19 million rented parking spaces in the United States. Mr. Mittelholzer also asked about the costs of parking in suburban areas, where facilities often have acres of free parking available. Mr. Hall responded that, given the difficulties of assigning a cost to parking in suburban areas, parking cash out programs are likely to have the biggest impact in urban areas.
- Mr. Mittelholzer and Mr. Rybeck made several general comments about the tax code and its applicability to funds used to pay for parking and commuting.

Overview of EPA's Transportation Air Quality Center (Lucie Audette, EPA-OMS)

Ms. Audette briefly reviewed a packet of documents describing EPA's Transportation Air Quality Center (TRAQ). TRAQ is a new technical assistance center that was recently launched by the Office of Mobile Sources in response to requests from stakeholders. The resources provided by TRAQ include technical assistance and publications, a web site, 7 databases, fact sheets and technical briefs, and guidance documents. TRAQ also is promoting and is involved in a number of partnerships and pilot programs.

Next Steps

Upon completion of all agenda items, the subcommittee discussed the date and location of the next meeting. Camille Mittelholtz, U.S. DOT, distributed several hand-outs to the subcommittee, including a news release on a clean air public information campaign and a summary of the TEA21 legislation, which includes provisions for a pilot program for sustainable

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